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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 366  
By Harper

A RESOLUTION To commemorate the opening of the Frist Center  
for the Visual Arts and celebrate its cultural  
contributions to our Capital City.

WHEREAS, The Tennessee General Assembly is pleased to specially recognize those  
fine institutions that bring the joys of artistic expression and culture to the citizens of this State;  
and

WHEREAS, The Frist Center for the Visual Arts is one such estimable institution; only in  
its infancy, the Center is already making a substantial contribution to the cultural fabric of this  
State and its Capital City; and

WHEREAS, The Center's development is the centerpiece of a downtown renaissance  
that is unprecedented here in its focus on culture, and it is viewed by the arts community as the  
completion of the missing link needed to make Nashville a first class city; and

WHEREAS, With the goal of increasing the community's "visual literacy," the family of  
Dr. Thomas F. Frist, Jr. and the charitable Frist Foundation joined with the Metropolitan  
Government of Nashville in a unique public-private partnership that made possible the Center's  
development; and

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WHEREAS, With its perfect location on Broadway, the city's former main post office was quickly identified as the ideal site for the Center, and upon further inspection, it became obvious that the building's grand interior held unlimited potential as a setting that could enhance the enjoyment of visual masterpieces from around the world; and

WHEREAS, Built during the Great Depression and opened in 1934, the post office was designed by Marr and Holman Architects to serve as a prominent symbol of our nation's continued strength and to give hope to the impoverished masses; the architects utilized granite and marble on a grand scale in constructing the lavish building, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984 in recognition of its status as a remarkable example of the Art Deco period of design; and

WHEREAS, In renovating the post office, Tuck Hinton Architects of Nashville wonderfully preserved the historic elegance of the Art Deco lobby and the marble and granite exterior while introducing contemporary features that complement the original structure; and

WHEREAS, The architect created an elegant staircase and new gallery foyer that serve to create a unifying space, linking the 24,000 square feet of galleries, which will present, over the course of time, ever-changing exhibitions of works by the world's greatest artists; and

WHEREAS, The gallery stairway leads gracefully into a sixty-foot-high space that is filled with natural light, which radiates through clerestory windows high above the space, once again introducing the sun's illumination to the heart of the building's 150,000 square feet; and

WHEREAS, Along with the addition of the café and courtyard to the building's exterior, a new frontal composition was developed to create an outdoor visual experience for visitors entering the Center; the result of the architect's efforts is a building that delights the eye with each view and provides an idyllic setting for the enjoyment of the visual arts; and

WHEREAS, To highlight the talent already present within this State, the architects and the Center's leadership asked local artists to participate in the restoration; P. J. Maxwell III erected a steel and glass donor wall, Tom Fuhrman created four glass fountain sculptures, and

Michael Cooper painted the roof's mechanical penthouse as a trompe l'oeil to match perfectly the building's original white marble; and

WHEREAS, When the Frist Center for the Visual Arts celebrated its Grand Opening on April 8, 2001, more than five thousand people turned out to commemorate the most widely anticipated event in Nashville arts history on a day in which Mayor Bill Purcell eloquently stated that "a great city has become greater still"; as visitors were introduced to the newly recreated interior of the building, their experience was enhanced by the vast talents of the Nashville Symphony, Fisk University's Jubilee Singers, and W. O. Smith School of Music Children's Chorus; and

WHEREAS, During their visits, patrons are free to enjoy the culinary delights of the Center's café, commemorate their visit with a memento from the gift shop, or simply relax in the large courtyard with its four beautiful fountains and park-like setting; and

WHEREAS, Adding greatly to the Center's potential as a hub of cultural education is a 250-seat auditorium that can easily accommodate small-scale musical and theatrical productions, films, lectures, workshops, and many other events related to the museum's mission and exhibitions; and

WHEREAS, The Center's commendable stated mission is "to provide a dynamic public facility for all Nashvillians that will stimulate and nourish their appreciation, understanding and creativity in the visual arts through a wide range of aesthetically significant, educational and entertaining programs for all ages... With an emphasis on educational programming aimed at enriching the enjoyment, understanding and study of the visual arts, especially in Nashville schools; and with a commitment to serving all sectors of Nashville's diverse communities, both at the Center and through stimulating outreach programs developed in ongoing consultation with those communities"; and

WHEREAS, The Center's leadership has put into place numerous resources to accomplish the goal of promoting "visual literacy," particularly among school children; and

WHEREAS, The "Opening Doors" program provides visitors with an introduction to the Center's exhibitions; currently those exhibitions include "An Enduring Legacy: Art of the Americas from Nashville Collections," which features more than 140 items drawn from the tremendous wealth of area collections, and "European Masterworks: Paintings from the Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario" in Toronto, Canada, which has brought to our state some of the world's most significant works, by such celebrated masters as Picasso, Rembrandt, Monet, and Van Gogh; and

WHEREAS, The Center's educators and docents are available to guide school groups through the galleries during visits that will surely serve to broaden the horizons of Tennessee's youth; in the Center's "ArtQuest" Gallery, newly-inspired artists of all ages will be free to engage in artistic activities as they explore hands-on, interactive ArtStations; and

WHEREAS, With the benefit of free admission for those age 18 and under, young people will be encouraged to make return visits, and, with the Center's constant influx of new works, each visit is sure to provide a new and inspiring experience; and

WHEREAS, To enhance cultural educational efforts, the Center has provided several invaluable resources to area teachers, by which they can access the Center's cutting edge Media and Technology Resource Center to craft the lessons that help mold the minds of Tennessee's youth; and

WHEREAS, Outreach programs provided by staff and volunteers will certainly prove quite useful in developing the "engaged, informed, educated and interested audience for the visual arts" that Chase Rynd, the Center's accomplished Executive Director, desires for Nashville; and

WHEREAS, It is the hope of people associated with the Center that it will be of benefit to the entire community of the region; as stated by Ken Roberts, President of The Frist Foundation and the Frist Center for the Visual Arts, "This is not going to be a place for the privileged 5%

who have the resources to see great art whenever they want. This is going to be for the other 95%. We're going to bring it to them"; and

WHEREAS, In addition to contributing significantly to the cultural fabric of Nashville, the Center is sure to play a key role in the city's economic development; as the Center's reputation grows nationally, it will become an effective advertisement for the exemplary quality of life in Tennessee that makes the area so attractive to prospective businesses and investors; and

WHEREAS, The Frist Center for the Visual Arts has already inspired applause from the arts community of our nation and brought honor to the state of Tennessee; its significance was most aptly summarized by Vice Mayor Ronnie Steine, who said, "Although there have been lots of wonderful ripples in the visual arts here, there has never been a focal point. This Center will drive education and interest and help all of the visual arts thrive"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby join with the good people who brought the Frist Center of the Visual Arts to our State and with the citizens of Tennessee in celebrating the Center's triumphal opening, and also in recognizing the invaluable contributions the Frist Center makes to our community and its cultural landscape, thus validating the Capital City's reputation as the once and future "Athens of the South."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.